

# President's Environmental Youth Awards



APRIL 2012



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APRIL 16, 2012



## *A Note from the EPA Administrator*

Congratulations to this year's President's Environmental Youth Award winners. You represent the best of the best young environmentalists among EPA's regions across the country.

I know that President Obama joins me and the EPA in thanking you for taking initiative in so many different areas. Whether you're finding innovative ways to safeguard our water resources or conserving the energy our communities use each day, each of you has advanced our mission to protect human health and the environment.



**Lisa P. Jackson**  
**Administrator**

Young people play a vital role in environmental protection. They show us how effective individuals can be at protecting the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we build our homes on, and they help remind us that environmental protection is something we can all be a part of.

The recipients of PEYA are some of the future environmental leaders of our country. On behalf of President Obama and the EPA, I thank you for your hard work, service and commitment to our planet.

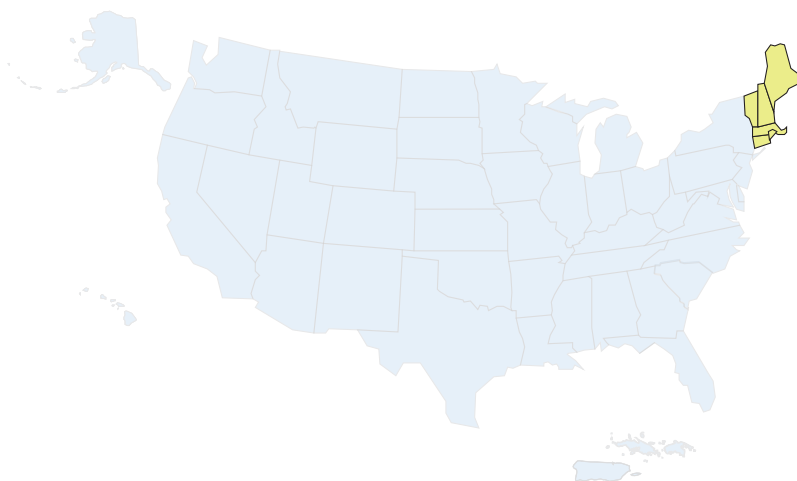
A stylized, handwritten signature of President Barack Obama in black ink.

## EPA REGION 1

### *Genetic Analysis of the Brown, Brook, and Tiger Trout Populations within the Lake Champlain Basin*

*Markie Palermo*

The Lake Champlain Basin covers over 8,000 square miles in Vermont and New York and is a vital ecosystem to the region. When Markie Palermo learned about the declining brook trout population in the Lake Champlain Basin, she asked if genetic analysis could be used to potentially solve this environmental problem. Markie worked with various partners to conduct research and investigate her hypothesis of hybridization of brook trout. With protocols and techniques in place and help from the experts, Markie successfully obtained trout DNA samples through the capture and safe release of the trout, analyzed the samples and found the genetic testing that supported her theory that hybridization had occurred within the basin. The results were disseminated on the local, regional, state and national level. Her research paper was accepted for publication by the Journal of Experimental Secondary Science for the January/February 2012 issue.



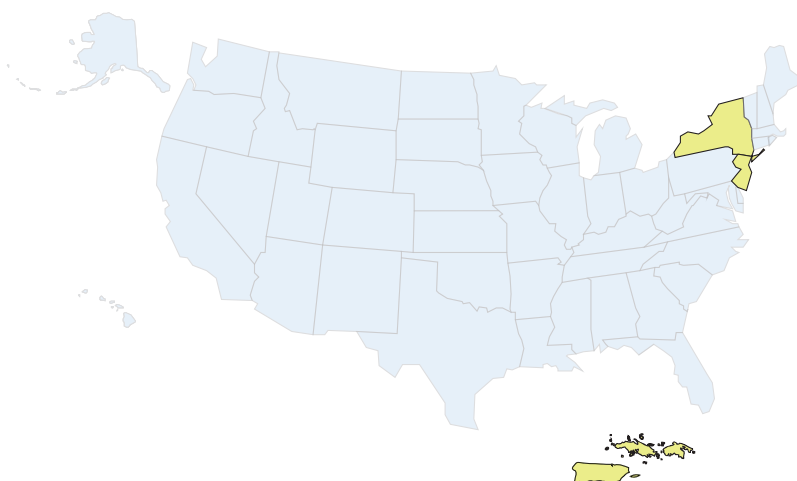
EPA REGION 1

## EPA REGION 2

### *Planet Green*

*Christopher J. Yao  
Jericho, NY*

Christopher developed a program called Planet Green in connection to his non-profit organization called Kids Change the World, designed to empower young people with start-up grants, websites, and other grassroots services/resources to start charitable/nonprofit programs to benefit the environment. Planet Green's website features educational facts about the environment and other resources for teachers to use in the classroom. Through this program, Christopher invests in an approach of enabling others to "take action" in communities and funding research that will pinpoint environmental issues to raise awareness/concern, and believes that this is one of the best ways to create a better world.



EPA REGION 2

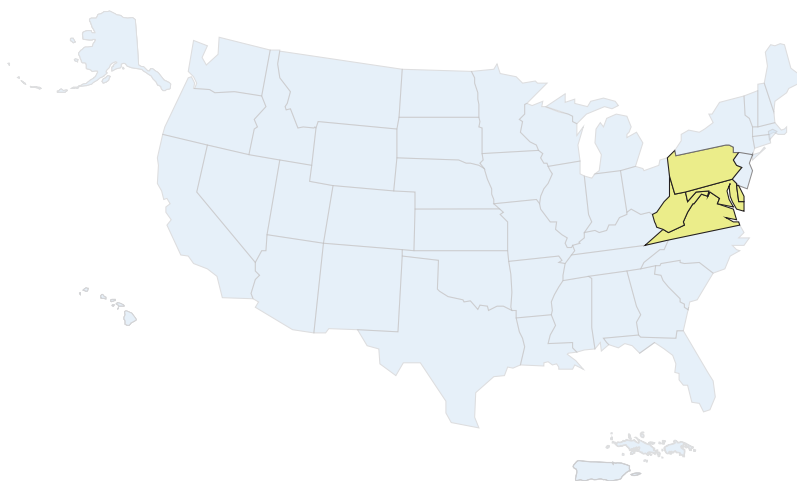


## EPA REGION 3

### *Hydroelectricity through Rainwater Collection: World Impact Starts in Your Own Backyard*

*Megan Rosenberger  
Natrona Heights, PA*

Megan's Rainwater Collection project has been ongoing for 2 years. Her engineering goal was to generate a greater amount of electricity in her rain barrel than previously created in the first year of her project by implementing the hydroelectric system in her home. Her purpose was to create more electricity by enhancing the components of her generator. The results of Megan's project demonstrated that she generated three times the electricity than generated in the first year, which she found to be statistically significant. With Megan's generator system, seven six-volt batteries could be filled within a year. By implementing her rain barrel system, she found that approximately 2.63 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions would be diminished from the atmosphere annually. Megan also worked with a local watershed organization to implement additional rain barrels in her community to save water and prevent flooding.



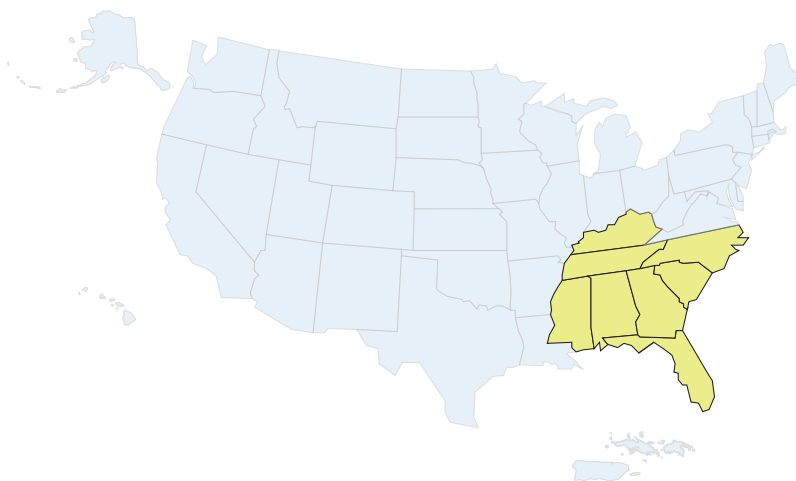
EPA REGION 3

## EPA REGION 4

*C.L.E.A.N. (Choosing to Lead Environmental Action Now)  
Club, Storm Drain Tagging & Environmental Education*

*Andrew Day  
Fort Valley, GA*

Pulaski County 4-H'er, Andrew Day, has a deep rooted passion for environmental education and wanted to be able to share it with others. Andrew noticed that Pulaski County needed help because of the rising levels of pollution in the Ocmulgee River from the city. In 2011, Andrew decided to confront the Hawkinsville City Manager to start the process concerning a storm drain tagging project in the city of Hawkinsville, and he convinced the manager to help with the project. To get peer support, Andrew started a club for 4-H students called the C.L.E.A.N. (Choosing to Lead Environmental Action Now) Club.



EPA REGION 4

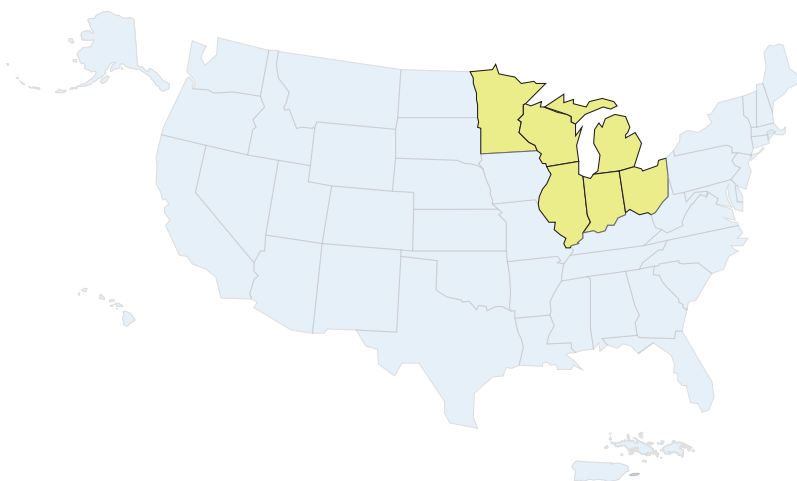


## EPA REGION 5

*Community Recycling Campaign, Inc.*

*Sachin Rudraraju  
Powell, Ohio*

Olentangy Liberty High School student Sachin Rudraraju, from Powell, Ohio, launched the Community Recycling Campaign (CRC). This campaign is a community awareness organization that provides alternative solutions for old or outdated computers and electronics in local subdivisions. Volunteers collect electronic items, refurbish them, and give them to local charities for reuse. Items that cannot be refurbished are sent to proper eWaste centers for recycling and disposal. CRC is responsible for diverting thousands of pounds of electronic waste from landfills to recycling centers in the city of Powell, Ohio.



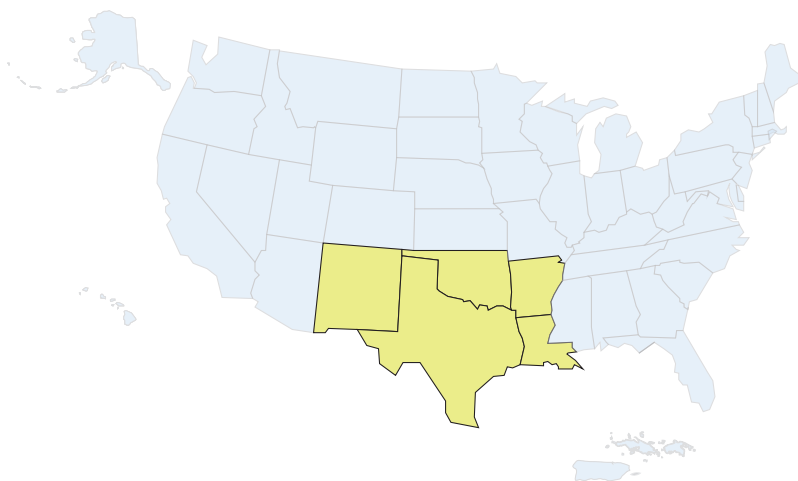
EPA REGION 5

## EPA REGION 6

### *Bringing Bats to Beavers Bend*

*Ainsley Campbell*  
*Frisco, Texas*

After taking an AP Environmental Science class, Ainsley Campbell became concerned about the long-term harmful effects of pesticides as well as the huge numbers of disease-carrying insects in local parks. When it came time to apply for her Girl Scout Gold Award during her junior year of high school, she decided to design and implement a project that would address those concerns. The purpose and goal of her project was to help her community solve the problem of insect control through environmentally safe and sustainable methods. She worked with her local government and community to build and hang ten bat boxes in a wooded park near her home. She received donations of cash and materials, then enlisted the help of her family and friends to build ten bat boxes. The boxes were made using chemical-free wood and materials and hung without using nails or hooks imbedded into the trees. Ainsley educated the community about her project through a scrapbook and the internet.



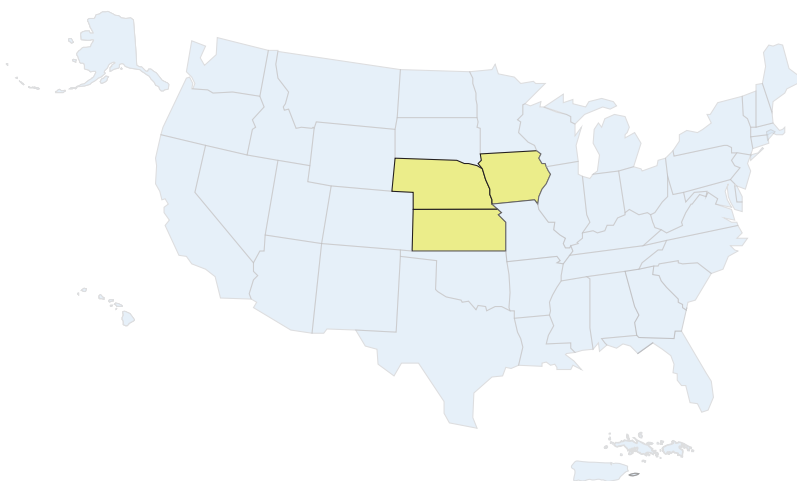
EPA REGION 6

## EPA REGION 7

### *Purple Loosestrife Project*

*Class of 2013, Niobrara High School  
Niobrara, Nebraska*

The Purple Loosestrife Project is a wetlands conservation project focused on controlling Purple Loosestrife, an aggressively invasive plant species, around the tiny town of Niobrara, Nebraska. This project started out as a one day a year community service project that has grown into a yearlong intensive conservation program; a legacy passing from one biology class to the next. The biology students collaborated with various state and federal agencies to raise *Galerucella* beetles in a constructed pond in an under-used playground area. Using GPS and population counts, the impact the beetles had on Purple Loosestrife infestations was documented. The result has been an increase in biodiversity in wetlands that were once completely infested with the “purple plague”. This project gave students the opportunity to do real science work and engage them in problem based learning.



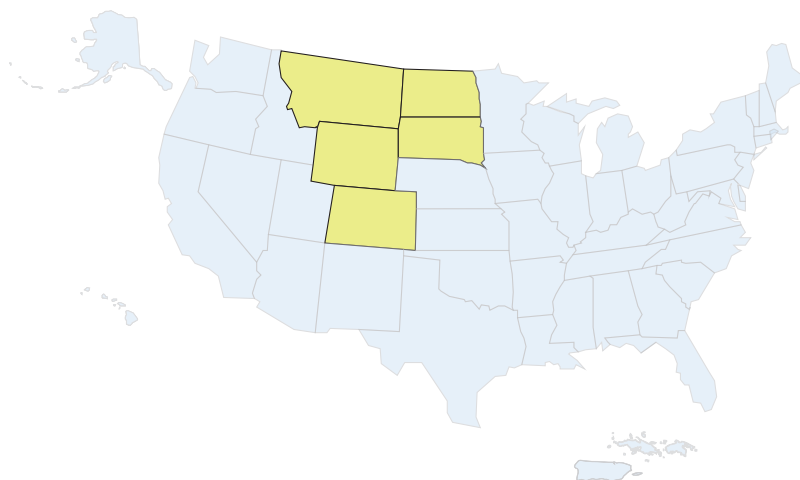
EPA REGION 7

## EPA REGION 8

### *Radon Awareness Project (RAP)*

*Christina and Eric Bear  
Golden, Colorado*

In November of 2010, Christina and Eric Bear developed the Radon Awareness Project (RAP) to educate Coloradans that radon exposure can cause lung cancer. Christina and Eric collaborated with various local, state, and federal agencies as well as other organizations to educate homeowners on radon awareness and testing. They presented information about radon to community outreach groups and government officials demanding greater attention to this invisible killer. The RAP is a concerted effort through multi-faceted community outreach and media exposure in order to reach homeowners; it is applicable to all states with high radon zones. The RAP has culminated in starting public policy in Colorado. Christina and Eric Bear have learned that kids, no matter how young, can positively impact environmental effects on health.

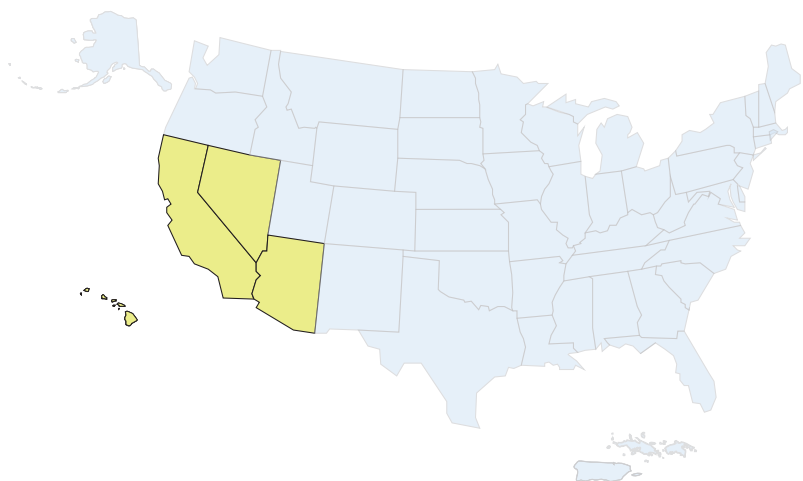


EPA REGION 8

## EPA REGION 9

### *The Whale Oak Park High School*

Since 2009, six high school students at Oak Park High School have been raising awareness of large container ships that strike and kill migrating whales in the Santa Barbara Channel, including the boundaries of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. The students learned about and became involved in whale protection issues and gained an understanding how whales around the world remain in danger due to hunting, pollution, and global climate change. They put this knowledge to use educating people about the beauty & majesty of whales. The students also developed a lesson plan for middle and high school students about whale migration and have done extensive research through the years regarding recommendations and petitions to move the shipping lanes out of the sensitive areas and reduce the speed of the ships as they transit through them. The students also authored a creative whale activity book that they used as one of their interactive activities while visiting elementary school students in the district.



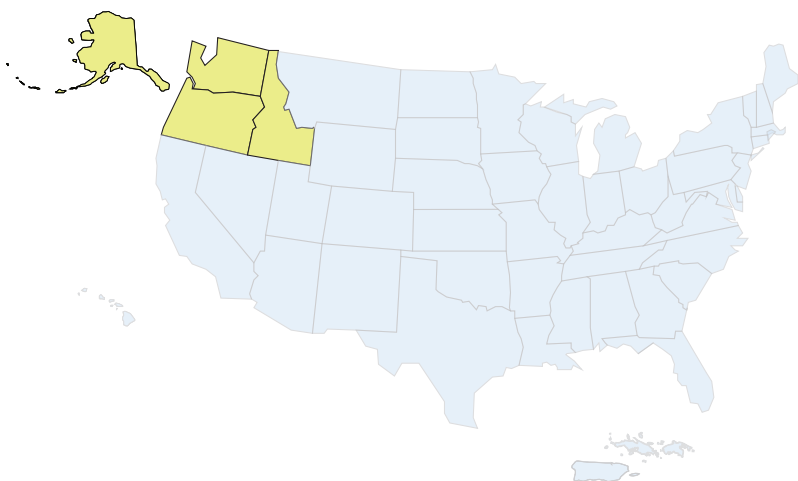
EPA REGION 9

## EPA REGION 10

### *Boise Riverbank Restoration Project*

*Carl Breidenbach, William D'Onofrio, and Nathan Wong  
Boise, Idaho*

Carl, William, and Nathan, along with community support, undertook the rehabilitation of a stretch of eroding bank on the Boise River greenbelt. To protect both land and aquatic life, they were determined to re-stabilize a destroyed area of the Boise River bank. Their plan was to provide a limited access trail, complete with native plants, but the specific requirements of this seemingly simple landscaping project required far more than anticipated. The students worked with every level of government, non-profits and businesses to re-stabilize the bank. Although the project took almost two years, it will last for decades, improving trout habitat, water quality, and creating a beautiful spot to stop along the Boise River. As the students reflected on this undertaking they found both the project process and accomplishing the work extraordinarily challenging.



EPA REGION 10

The President's Environmental Youth Award program promotes awareness of our nation's natural resources and encourages positive community involvement. Since 1971, the President of the United States has joined with EPA to recognize young people across the U.S. for protecting our nation's air, water, land, and ecology. It is one of the most important ways EPA and the Administration demonstrate commitment to environmental stewardship efforts created and conducted by our nation's young people.

One outstanding project from each region is selected for national recognition. Projects are developed by young individuals, school classes (K-12), summer camps, and youth organizations to promote environmental stewardship.



